MEMORANDUM TO THE WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

April 14, 2005

TO: ***Members of the Water Policy Task Force***

FROM: ***Daniel E. Griset, Sr. Regional Planner, X895, griset@scag.ca.gov***

SUBJECT: ***Water Issues and a 2005 Revise of the Regional Comprehensive Plan***

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive for future consideration of a draft Water chapter for the Regional Comprehensive Plan at the June 9, 2005 meeting of the Task Force.

BACKGROUND:

The Regional Council has called for an update of the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (RCP&G), a multi-faceted document that contained two water chapters. The Water Resources chapter was adopted in December 1994. The Water Quality Chapter was adopted in January 1995.

Staff is preparing a new draft water chapter that reflects current SCAG policies and plans, as well as current regional water realities. On March 28, 2005 staff met with the Regional Comprehensive Plan Task Force for dialogue on some of these water issues. This dialogue was based on the attached staff memo that highlighted nine themes. Also presented to the Task Force was the attached inventory of policies identified in the RCP&G and Regional Transportation Plans, along with staff recommendations for policy revisions.

Attachments

1. **Bo Cutter Memo on Item 4.2**

2. **Staff Memo to Regional Comprehensive Plan Task Force (March 28, 2005)**

3. **Inventory of Regional Water Policies and Mitigation Measures and Staff Recommendations for Revisions**

4. **May 19 TMDL Workshop at the Bren School, UC Santa Barbara**

TO: SCAG WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

FROM: W. BOWMAN CUTTER

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM 4.2
SWRCB COST ESTIMATES

DATE: APRIL 14, 2005 WATER POLICY TASK FORCE MEETING

There are now several studies and projections of stormwater costs or components of stormwater costs. Gordon et.al estimated the costs of using advanced treatment of stormwater for significant portions of Los Angeles area runoff. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB) estimated current costs of stormwater programs in its region. We also have projections of the costs of the Los Angeles River Trash and Ballona Creek Metals TMDL. Task A of the study funded by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is along the lines of the LARWQCB study in that it attempts to estimate cities' current spending. Task B, similar in its goals to the Gordon study, attempts to project stormwater costs in L.A. County if alternatives to advanced treatment such as infiltration and source control are used.[1] With these studies, we now have a range of likely stormwater costs which should help inform the public debate over the extent of stormwater regulation. A detailed look at the findings of Task A of the SWRCB study will be presented on Thursday. The task force may want to consider a recommendation from this study for the creation and adoption of a set of uniform rules for stormwater expenditure accounting.

Because of the debate over local public costs of implementing stormwater regulations, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) decided to fund a research project to compile a snapshot of existing stormwater expenditures from six cities (Task A of the SWRCB study). The research was not intended to project stormwater costs into the future, but rather to provide an expenditure baseline for a set of cities which are currently operating good stormwater programs. Since stormwater expenditures are

[1] Task B also includes some estimates of recreation, water supply, and other benefits.

likely to rise substantially, this baseline can provide a way to measure the additional burden on local governments of implementing future stormwater regulations. The study found that existing costs are somewhat higher than previous studies had indicated. Mean costs were $29/household (with a range of $18-46 per household) compared to a mean of $10/household from a previous EPA study. Further findings will be summarized in the presentation.

Throughout this project, the researchers found it difficult to define comparable expenditures across cities, even though the existence of a stormwater fund to track expenditures was a criterion for selection. In response to this difficulty, the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for this study recommends that a uniform system to account for stormwater expenditures and financing should be developed. However, the TAG recognizes that not all cities will be able or willing to implement a uniform accounting system and instead recommends a flexible approach where cities who implement a uniform stormwater expenditure accounting system would be awarded extra points when competing for statewide grant or loan funds. Widespread adoption of uniform stormwater accounting rules would be especially useful in Southern California as it would build trust by giving environmental advocates, taxpayer groups and local government officials a common set of figures for both expenditure and financing decisions. Also, it would aid decision makers in comparing the effectiveness of different programs. The Task Force could support this recommendation by working with the League of California Cities and California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA) to develop a uniform set of accounting rules, and then working jointly with the SWRCB to have the rules integrated into grant funding decisions.

The SWRCB study, by computing an expenditure baseline, allows a comparison of current expenditures with projected future costs. Projected annualized costs for the Ballona Creek Metals TMDL and the L.A. River Trash TMDL are $75/household and $141/household respectively. Task B of the SWRCB study estimates a range of costs from $27 to $71 per household for solving all stormwater quality issues and the Gordon et al. study has a low-end estimate of $459/household. The Task B authors qualify their findings with the suggestion that if advanced treatment is required; costs will be

significantly above their high-end estimates. These cost projections appear to be mostly in addition to current stormwater program costs. However, some of the costs of the Task B study are private rather than public costs.

To put these cost in perspective, total local government waste handling (sewage and solid waste) expenditures are around $605/household in California.[2] Even under the lower cost scenarios, then, costs could approach a third of current waste handling expenditures. Under the more expensive scenarios, the estimated costs begin to approach or even exceed current waste handling expenditures, which seems difficult to justify. The message of these studies seems to be twofold: 1) the cost of approaches like increased infiltration and source control are likely to be significant relative to other public programs and likely to be significantly above current expenditure levels; and 2) Any substantial amount of advanced treatment would put costs at a level difficult to justify or finance.

[2]Sources: 2001-2002 Census of Government, U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey 2002, U.S. Census Bureau.

MEMO

TO: Regional Comprehensive Plan Task Force

FROM: Daniel E. Griset, Senior Regional Planner, griset@scag.ca.gov, (213) 236-1895

DATE: March 28, 2005

SUBJECT: Water Element of the Regional Comprehensive Plan

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Provide input to staff regarding issues to be addressed in the Water Chapter of the Regional Comprehensive Plan, and report to the Energy and Environment Committee.

SUMMARY:

Clean and reliable water in the SCAG region is essential to the future quality of life in our growing region. The projected growth in population and jobs is certain to increase the water challenges the region will face in the coming years. These challenges include the creation of environmentally sustainable communities, the management of stormwater and urban runoff pollution, interagency collaboration and initiatives within shared watersheds, the development of new local water resources and infrastructure, the expansion of current water conservation programs, the on-going availability of imported supplemental water supplies, the increased use of water markets and transfers, the development of improved water treatment technologies and the increased coordination of policy and resources among all levels of government.

Regional policies have been adopted by the Regional Council to address these challenges. These range from the Council's consideration of significant regional water issues to adopted mitigation measures identified in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Reports of past Regional Transportation Plans. In general, these policies have focused on improving regional environmental quality and best management practices, cost-effective watershed pollution controls and reliable water supplies for growing urban communities. These themes will be developed in the coming draft of the Water Chapter in the Regional Comprehensive Plan.

BACKGROUND:

These water policy and issue themes will include the following kinds of discussion:

The creation of environmentally sustainable communities: Water quality and water supply are influenced by the design elements used in planning and creating new communities. Compact development designs that reduce impervious surfaces and increase natural areas not only allow for natural runoff purification treatment, but also save stormwater for groundwater infiltration.

The management of stormwater and urban runoff pollution: Water quality regulators are issuing increasingly stringent rules to reduce local stormwater and urban runoff pollution. These regulations apply to individual jurisdictions and, by various studies, are expected to be very costly mandates for local agencies in the SCAG region. Based on SCAG's historic interest in "areawide waste treatment management

planning", regional policy emphasizes the need for watershed-scale planning (a new way of describing "areawide planning") and implementation of pollution control measures. This scale of environmental management is expected to bring needed improvements on a much more cost-effective basis that from individual projects in each local jurisdiction. This same approach offers Caltrans and other regional transportation agencies new ways to reduce their runoff management costs.

Interagency collaboration and initiatives within shared watersheds: Water supplies needed for future growth in the region depend on infrastructure and resource collaboration within each of the watersheds of the region. Too often the agencies that manage water supplies have restricted their planning and activities to only their own service areas, limiting their ability to plan more comprehensively. The same concerns apply to the need for collaboration among agencies impacted by water quality regulations within a watershed.

The development of new local water resources and infrastructure: Because of recent state legislation, the region's future growth is now linked with water supplies. This growth, both infill and otherwise, will place new strains on the current water infrastructure. In some cases it will require retrofitting and replacing old systems; in others it will require extending systems to serve new customers. This infrastructure challenge ranges from system plumbing to water management practices and flexibility.

The expansion of current water conservation programs: Water conservation is an indispensable element in the ability of our growing region to achieve needed water reliability. There is a consumption parallel between agricultural water use in the state and in residential landscape irrigation: agriculture consumes about 80 percent of the state's water supply and residential landscape irrigation consumes about 80 percent of the household water supply. New irrigation practices and technology can reduce this outside use, along with changes in plant selection that work well with native, drought-tolerant conditions. Installation of water-saving devices and appliances in new and existing residences is another important conservation opportunity.

The on-going availability of imported supplemental water supplies: Imported water supplies are increasingly constrained by competing claims and environmental considerations. These concerns raise the importance of the CalFed Bay-Delta Program, the water supply impacts from habitat and other ecological activities throughout the state and other complex management and planning issues related to the Colorado River.

The increased use of water markets and transfers: The development of markets for the transfer of water between different basins is an important factor for improving the region's water reliability and for improving water quality in the region's water supplies. The ability of water agencies in the region to acquire surplus water from other areas encourages the development of more ambitious groundwater storage programs and makes possible the advantages of conjunctive water use.

The development of improved water treatment technologies: Current water treatment technologies are chemical and energy-intensive. Along with pollution source controls and natural treatment systems, new technological development needs to be encouraged that reduces the heavy reliance on these factors and minimizes by-products that impair the resulting water supplies. New treatment breakthroughs can also contribute to needed increases in water reclamation and reuse throughout the region, especially in the management and use of groundwater basins.

The increased coordination of policy and resources among all levels of government: With a flexible water policy and resources infrastructure, comprehensive watershed-scale solutions and creative regional

governance, water supply and water quality challenges can be met. Cost considerations are always important in meeting these challenges, but policy and program coordination can forge influential coalitions, reduce costs and improve the potentials for success.

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Summary of Water Policy Statements and Revision Recommendations

March 28, 2005

Regional Comprehensive Plan Task Force

	Policy Statement from 1996 Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide	Staff Revision Recommendations
1	Encourage planned development in locations least likely to cause environmental impact.	Encourage planned development to use designs that minimize structural footprints and maximize non-impervious surfaces.
2	The population, housing, and jobs forecasts, which are adopted by SCAG's Regional Council and that reflect local plans and policies, shall be used by SCAG in all phases of implementation and review.	NA
3	In areas with large seasonal population fluctuations, such as resort areas, forecast permanent populations. However, appropriate infrastructure systems should be sized to serve high season population totals.	OK
4	Encourage patterns of urban development and land use, which reduce costs on infrastructure construction and make better use of existing facilities.	OK
5	Support the protection of vital resources such as wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands, production lands, and land containing unique and endangered plants and animals.	Support the protection and expansion of open spaces such as wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, woodlands and other valuable watershed habitat.
6	Develop well-managed viable ecosystems or known habitats of rare, threatened and endangered species, including wetlands.	See 5 above.
7	Streamline water quality regulatory implementation. Identify and eliminate overlaps with other regulatory programs to reduce economic impacts on local businesses.	Encourage coordination between water quality regulations and other regulatory programs to minimize economic impacts on local agencies and businesses.
8	Encourage "watershed management" programs and strategies, recognizing the primary role of local governments in such efforts.	OK
9	Encourage opportunities for pollution reduction marketing and other market-incentive water quality programs as an alternative to strict command-and-control regulation.	OK
10	Clean up the contamination in the region's major groundwater aquifers since its water supply is critical to the long-term economic and environmental health of the region. The financing of such clean-ups should leverage state and federal resources and minimize significant impacts on the local economy.	Clean up of groundwater contamination is an essential step in developing new regional water storage, as well as improving the long-term environmental and economic health of the region. Clean up financing should leverage state and federal resources to minimize significant impacts on the local economy.
11	Encourage water reclamation throughout the region where it is cost-effective, feasible, and appropriate to reduce reliance on imported water and wastewater discharges. Current administrative impediments to increased use of wastewater should be addressed.	Encourage water reclamation throughout the region where it is a cost-effective and feasible way to reduce reliance on imported water. Impediments to the reuse of highly treated wastewater should be addressed and minimized.
12	Ensure wastewater treatment agency facility planning and facility development be consistent with population projections contained in the RCPG, while taking into account the need to build wastewater treatment facilities in cost-effective increments of capacity, the need to build well enough in advance to reliably meet unanticipated service and storm water demands, and the need to provide standby capacity for public safety and environmental protection objectives.	Encourage the planning and delivery of wastewater treatment capacity in the region that is sufficient to meet future service demands and to accommodate the treatment of urban runoff and other flows that may create water quality impairments.

	Policy Statement from 1996 Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide	Staff Revision Recommendations
13	Coordinate watershed management planning at the subregional level by (1) providing consistent regional data; (2) serving as a liaison between affected local, state, and federal watershed management agencies; and (3) ensuring that watershed planning is consistent with other planning objectives (e.g., transportation, air quality, water supply).	Encourage watershed management initiatives within the subwatersheds of the region by (1) providing appropriate regional data; (2) facilitating collaboration between local, state, and federal stakeholders; and (3) ensuring that these initiatives are consistent with other regional priorities (e.g., transportation, air quality, water supply).
14	The timing, financing, and location of public facilities, utility systems, and transportation systems shall be used by SCAG to implement the region's growth policies.	NA
15	Provide, as appropriate, legislative support and advocacy of regional water conservation, supply and water quality projects.	Provide, as appropriate, legislative and advocacy support of regional water conservation and supply projects, as well as comprehensive and cost-effective water quality initiatives.
16	Work with local jurisdictions and water quality agencies, through its Water Policy Task Force and other means, to encourage regional-scale planning for improved water quality management and pollution prevention. Future impacts to water quality shall be avoided through cooperative planning, information sharing and comprehensive pollution control measure	In conjunction with the Water Policy Task Force, support local entities and water quality agencies in creating integrated subwatershed implementation plans to improve regional water quality and prevent impairments caused by urban runoff pollution.
17	Work with local jurisdictions and water agencies, through its Water Policy Task Force and other means, including the update of the Water Quality and Water Resources chapters for SCAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide, to encourage regional-scale planning for improved stormwater management and groundwater recharge. Future adverse impacts shall be avoided through cooperative planning, information sharing, and comprehensive implementation efforts within the SCAG region. SCAG's Water Policy Task Force offers an opportunity for local jurisdictions and water agencies to share information and strategies for improving regional performance in these efforts.	These points appear elsewhere in this inventory.
18	Encourage wastewater treatment agencies to have expansion plans, approvals and financing in place once their facilities are operating at 80 percent of capacity. Through the update to the Water Quality and Water Resources chapters of SCAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide, SCAG shall provide opportunities for information sharing and program development.	The main points are treated elsewhere in this inventory.
19	Facilitate local water agencies' informing local jurisdictions of their continued efforts to evaluate future water demands and establish the necessary supply and infrastructure, as documented in their Urban Water Management Plans to meet projected demand in 2030.	Facilitate communications and information sharing between local entities and water agencies, as needed, in order to support the preparation of updates to Urban Water Management Plans throughout the region.
20	Facilitate information-sharing about water policy-related regional coordination throughout California and the Colorado River Basin that develops and supports sustainable growth policies.	Facilitate information sharing among local agencies to ensure that the region's reliance on external water supplies is coordinated with other water policies to support sustainable growth of the region.
21	Minimize impacts to water supply by developing incentives, education and policies to further encourage water conservation and thereby reduce demand.	Support incentives, public education and other policies that encourage residential water conservation and improve local water resources.

	Policy Statement from 1996 Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide	Staff Revision Recommendations
22	Involve the region's water supply agencies in planning efforts in order to make water resource information, such as water supply and water quality, location of recharge areas and groundwater, and other useful information available to local jurisdictions for use in their land use planning and decisions.	Provide information and other appropriate resources to water agencies and local watershed entities to support improved resource management decision making.
23	Promote water-efficient land use development.	Encourage local land use agencies to adopt water-wise development policies.
24	Develop strategies to accommodate growth that use resources efficiently, eliminate pollution and significantly reduce waste.	Encourage growth strategies that use resources efficiently, eliminate pollution and significantly reduce waste.
25	Supports plan for the historic use of surplus water to be addressed with a combination of water transfers as the result of conservation in the agricultural sectors and a reasonable wheeling cost that facilitates water transfers but does not result in cost shifting or a reduction in water service reliability for non-participating agencies.	Encourage water management policies that emphasize stewardship principles, favor responsible water transfers from agricultural to urban communities, and strengthens regional water reliability.
26	Supports only the use of the best available technology including monitoring, air, and water impacts for locating any nuclear waste facility.	NA
27	Supports Proposition 204 to secure federal funds for Delta restoration as described by CALFED.	Support a CALFED program with appropriate balances between its urban, agricultural and environmental priorities and with balanced cost sharing among the program beneficiaries.

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